



DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

INFORMATION SERVICE

UNITED STATES FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

For Release APRIL 25, 1957

GRAY WHALE HERD MOVING NORTH TO BERING SEA

The gray whale is now heading north to its summer feeding grounds in the Bering Sea in a migration that will get little public observation, according to the Fish and Wildlife Service of the Department of the Interior.

This whale, a scenic attraction on its journey south close to shore during the winter months, makes its northward migration virtually unnoticed--the thousands of migrants being spread over too wide an area in the Pacific and usually too far from shore to attract attention. On its way southward it travels in a relatively narrow corridor seldom more than three miles from shore.

During the recent winter Fish and Wildlife observers at the La Jolla, California, station counted 1,782 of these animals migrating to their wintering grounds. In one period the whales were about five miles apart. Traveling at five miles an hour, that meant a whale an hour passed the observers.

Their wintering ground is along the Coast of Lower California, and some of the whales even round the tip of the long peninsula and feed not far from the main coast of Mexico.

Once plentiful, the gray whale was harvested to the point of near extinction. Now it is protected by international agreement. Presently it is estimated there are about 4,000 adult gray whales and 500 calves, although conditions make an accurate census difficult.

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